



**CALIFORNIA
HIGH-SPEED RAIL
AUTHORITY**

TO: Chairman Pringle and Authority Board Members

FROM: Dan Leavitt, Deputy Director

DATE: November 30, 2009

**RE: Alternative Analysis Update San Jose to Merced Section
Agenda Item 13**

The purpose of this agenda item is to summarize the results of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSR) staff Alternatives Analysis Workshop for the California High-Speed Train (HST) Project San Jose to Merced Section. The San Jose to Merced Section of the California HST project is approximately 125 miles long. The limits are from the San Jose HST Station to the east through the planned junction (weave) with the Merced to Fresno HST corridor and then north to Merced.

In the spring of 2009, three scoping meetings were held for this section in Merced, Gilroy and San Jose, and additional public meetings were held in communities along the alignment. Informal stakeholder meetings were also held. Many of the comments gathered at the meetings and during the scoping period addressed alignment issues and proposed alignment alternatives and design options for consideration.

These comments were distilled to produce initial alignment alternatives and station and design options for consideration in an Alternatives Analysis (AA) Report. In the summer of 2009, these initial alternatives were presented to federal, state and local agencies at technical working group meetings, and public information meetings were conducted. Additional stakeholder meetings were also held, and the alignments and design options were refined based on the input received.

The alignments, station location and design options were then evaluated using established CAHSR criteria, and an FRA/CAHSR AA workshop was conducted in November 2009 to present information regarding alternatives being studied. The purpose of the workshop was to obtain direction from the FRA/CAHSR staff on the need for further investigation of alternatives and discuss evaluation results and conclusions. The attached maps and tables summarize the results of that workshop, including which HST alignment alternatives, stations and design options should be carried forward into the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) process.

To simplify the evaluation, the San Jose to Merced HST Section was divided into six geographic subsections for the analysis: San Jose Station Approach, Monterey Highway, Morgan Hill – Gilroy, Pacheco Pass, and San Joaquin Valley Crossing, and Wye-Merced (evaluated by others). Alignment alternatives within each subsection may be “mixed and matched” with those from each adjacent subsection. On the maps, each alignment alternative within the subsection is color-keyed to the key issue descriptions on the maps. Solid lines indicate alignment alternatives that were selected during the workshop to be carried forward into the EIR/EIS process. Dashed lines indicate the alignment alternatives that were evaluated and determined not to be carried forward.

The supporting detailed analysis of the alternatives and station and design options will be provided in the draft Alternatives Analysis report to be made available for public review in December. This report will be presented to and reviewed with public agencies, and with the general public at meetings in December 2009 and January 2010. Based on comments received, the report will then be refined and issued as a Final AA report.

Board Recommendation

This is an informational item only.

Attachments:

- Alignment maps and summary tables of alternatives analysis evaluation criteria and results.